

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 21-37 are pending in the application, with Claims 1-20 cancelled and Claims 21-37 added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the abstract was objected to; Claims 1-4, 9, 10, and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Conklin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,388,050, hereinafter Conklin); and Claim 5-8 and 11-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Conklin.

The abstract is corrected as requested by the Examiner. New Claims 21-37 correspond to original Claims 1-20, albeit rewritten to more clearly describe and distinctly claim Applicants' inventions. Support for new Claims 21-37 is found in Applicants' originally filed specification.¹ No new matter is added.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the personal interview between the Examiner and Applicants' representative on April 20, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner suggested clarifying the claims, particularly with regard to the claimed 'plurality of stages.'

Briefly recapitulating, new Claim 21 is directed to a method for managing sales activities. The method includes a) storing in database information relative to each of a plurality of predetermined maturity stages of a sales transaction with a specific customer; b) retrieving a portion of said information, said portion corresponding to at least one of said plurality of predetermined maturity stages; and c) displaying said portion. The present invention allows for improved sales efficiency without depending on the skills of the sales

¹ Specification, page 14, line 1 – page 15, line 8.

person. The present invention also allows a sales manager to objectively evaluate sales staff performance.²

Conklin discloses a multivariate negotiations engine for international transaction processing, including seller processes, sponsor processes, and buyer processes.³ Seller processes include alerts that a pending offer or counter-offer has been submitted. In addition, a seller may establish a website to store sales and advertising information. Also, a seller may be notified of offers/counter-offers by email or a browser.⁴ However, Conklin does not disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed step of "storing in database information relative to each of a plurality of predetermined maturity stages of a sales transaction with a specific customer." That is, in Conklin there is no reference to any predetermined maturity stages, let alone Applicants' disclosed maturity stages.⁵ Applicants further submit that Conklin fails to disclose Applicants claimed "retrieving a portion of said information, said portion corresponding to at least one of said plurality of predetermined maturity stages."

As Conklin fails to disclose or suggest all the elements of independent Claim 21, Applicants submit the inventions defined by Claim 21, and all claims depending therefrom, are not rendered obvious by the asserted prior art for at least the reasons stated above.⁶ For similar reasons, Applicants submit that the inventions defined by independent Claims 32 and 35 and all claims depending therefrom, patentably define over the cited reference.

² Specification, page 2, lines 7-18.

³ Conklin, column 19, lines 14-26; Figure 1g.

⁴ Conklin, column 19, lines 28-37; Figure 1g.

⁵ Specification, page 14, line 1 – page 15, line 8.

⁶ MPEP § 2142 "...the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest **all** the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure. In re Vaack, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991)."

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Accordingly, in view of the present amendment and in light of the previous discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully request an early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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